

## Message Text

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FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7967

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG PRIORITY

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CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PEKING 1168

LIMDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (MRN1168 VICE 00001)

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT CH

SUBJ: THE CHINESE LEADERSHIP

REF: PEKING 134

1. BEGIN INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY. PARTY CHAIRMAN AND PREMIER HUA  
KUO-FENG, WHOSE CALLIGRAPHY IDENTIFIES MAO'S MAUSOLEUM AND WHOSE GIAN  
T

BUST FACES AND SHARES EQUAL PROMINENCE WITH CHOU EN-LAI'S IN THE NATI

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ONAL

ART GALLERY, APPEARS TO US FOR LESS VISIBLE REASONS TO HAVE STRENGTHEN

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ED

HIS POSITION. AN ACCIDENTAL LEADER INITIALLY ELEVATED FOR HIS INOFFEN

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SIVENESS, HUA HAS CAPITALIZED ON HIS ASSETS: THE ANTI-TENG FORCES  
RALLIED AROUND HIM; A LESS-FLAWED CLAIM TO LEGITIMACY THAN ANYONE ELSE

E

HAS, THE MEANS TO CREATE A PERSONALITY CULT. HE HAS SKILLFULLY STRADDLED THE FENCE ON CONTENTIOUS ISSUES; HE HAS IMPARTED A SENSE OF FORWARD MOTION THROUGH HIS LEADERSHIP AT NATIONAL ECONOMIC CONFERENCES; AND A DIVIDED MILITARY LEADERSHIP CANNOT REMOVE HIM FROM POWER. WE PRESUME, HOWEVER, THAT THE OUTWARDLY PLACID POLITICAL SCENE CONCEALS CONSIDERABLE BACKSTAGE MANEUVERING AIMED AT STACKING THE DECK AT FORTHCOMING PARTY AND STATE CONFERENCES IN FAVOR OF TENG HSIAO-PING AND HIS POLICIES. AND WE SUSPECT THAT COMPOSITION OF THE NEW PARTY AND STATE LEADERSHIPS WILL ENTAIL A BATTLE ROYAL CENTERING OVER GENERATIONAL, REGIONAL AND IDEOLOGICAL AFFILIATIONS. IF HUA PULLS OFF THE CONGRESSES AS SCHEDULED, AND DOES SO WITHOUT RELINQUISHING MUCH AUTHORITY TO GENG AND THE OLD GUARD, HE WILL INDEED BE "THE WORTHY SUCCESSOR TO CHAIRMAN MAO". BUT THE MORE LIKELY OUTCOME, WE THINK, IS A SET OF NEGOTIATED COMPROMISES, A STILL-DIVIDED LEADERSHIP, AND MANY MORE MONTHS OF INTERNECINE STRUGGLING BEFORE THE GENUINE POST-MAO LEADERSHIP EMERGES. END INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY.

2. HUA KUO-FENG HAS EMERGED FROM THE MARCH LEADERSHIP MEETINGS AND THE NATIONAL TACHING CONFERENCE WITH SIGNIFICANTLY GREATER VISIBILITY AND APPARENTLY ENHANCED AUTHORITY, A LEADER PORTRAYED, LITERALLY, AS MELDING THE BEST QUALITIES OF MAO AND CHOU. HIS CLAIM TO PARTY LEADER

SHIP NO LONGER RESTS SO MUCH ON MAO'S SUSPECT SIX-CHARACTER BENEDICTION; "WITH YOU IN CHARGE, I'M AT EASE." HUA NOW HAS GOING FOR HIM TANGIBLE ACHIEVEMENTS, A SYMPATHETIC PUBLIC IMAGE, AND POTENT BACKING.

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3. HE DEFTLY STAGEMANAGED A SUCCESSION OF NATIONAL-LEVEL CONFERENCES,

NOTABLY THE TACHAI CONFERENCE LAST DECEMBER AND THE JUST-ENDED TACHING

CONFERENCE; HE HAS VIGOROUSLY PROSECUTED THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE "GANG OF FOUR" WHILE SIDESTEPPING EXPLOSIVE CONFRONTATIONS; HE IS RIDING THE CREST OF POPULAR APPROVAL FOR THE MORE PRAGMATIC POLICIES NOW IN VOGUE; AND HE IS THE BENEFICIARY OF A CONCERTED MEDIA AND ARTS EFFORT RESURGENT SINCE LATE MARCH TO CONSTRUCT AROUND HIM A CULT OF PERSONALITY.

HIS MANNER AND STYLE WHEN RECEIVING FOREIGN LEADERS EVOKE UNCANNILY AND PROBABLY BY DESIGN, MEMORIES OF MAO; HE INSPECTS PROVINCE AND MUNICIPALITIES AS THE YOUNG MAO DID, BUT INTERACTS WITH

THE MASSES IN THE WARMER MORE DOWN-TO-EARTH CHOU EN-LAI MANNER, "LISTENING TO OPINIONS", HSI WORK REPORTS AND RANDOM JOTTINGS FROM HIS

HUNAN DAYS A DECADE AGO ARE SPLASHED ACROSS THE FRONT PAGE WITH LAUD-

ATORY EDITOR'S NOTES; HE HAS BLOSSOMED AS A "GOOD STUDENT"  
AND INTERPRETER OF MAOIST IDEOLOGY WITH HIS ESSAY ON VOLUME FIVE OF  
MAO'S  
SELECTED WORKS; HE IS CITED AS HANDING DOWN "INSTRUCTIONS," "TASKS,"  
AND "GUIDANCE"; AND THIS THOUGHTS, EXTRACTED FROM HIS BURGEONING CORP  
US  
OF PUBLISHED SPEECHES AND WRITINGS, NOW ALTERNATE REGULARLY WITH THOS  
E  
OF LENIN AND MAO.

4. WHAT MAKES ALL THIS POSSIBLE IS THE COALITION HUA HAS WELDED --  
OR MORE ACCURATELY INHERITED BY DEFAULT -- SINCE LAST OCTOBER. AS WE  
SEE IT, THE TENG HSIAO-PING ISSUE GALVANIZED EARLIER SUPPORT FOR HUA  
AMONG AN OTHERWISE UNLIKELY ASSEMBLAGE OF BEDFELLOWS: LIFELONG  
ASSOCIATES OF MAO LIKE SECURITY BOSS WANG TUNG-HSING; SLIGHTLY YOUNGE  
R  
AND MORE LEFTIST NATIONAL LEADERS-- PEKING PARTY BOSS WU TEH AND POSS  
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BLY  
VICE PREMIER CHI TENG-KUEI ARE EXAMPLES -- WHOSE INFLUENCE WOULD  
DECLINE SHOULD TENG RETURN TO DISPENSE PATRONAGE TO HIS ELDER AND MOR  
E  
CONSERVATIVE CRONIES; AND REGIONAL MILITARY LEADERS -- LI TEN-SHENG  
IN THE NORTHEAST AND CHEN HSI-LIEN IN THE CAPITAL -- WARY OF THE RISI  
NG  
INFLUENCE OF THE YEH CHIEN-YING/HSUSHIH-YU/TENG HSIAO-PING ALLIANCE.  
IN  
STARK POWER TERMS, HUA'S BACKERS TOGETHER CONSTITUTE A FORMIDABLE COA  
LI-  
TION, CONTROLLING,  
AT LEAST ON PAPER, THE PARTY, SECRET POLICE, AND MILITARY UNITS IN  
PEKING AND THE SURROUNDING AREA.

5. HUA STILL STRIKES US AS A WHOLLY ACCIDENTAL LEADER, HOWEVER, AN  
AFFABLE, PEDESTRIAN, FENCE-STRADDLING MANAGER INITIALLY ELEVATED WELL  
BEYOND HIS OBSERVABLE REALM OF COMPETENCE BECAUSE HE HAD OFFENDED FEW  
AND BECAUSE THE MORE DYNAMIC CONTENDERS FOR MAO'S MANTLE CONSIDERED  
HIM A PATSY EASILY THRUST ASIDE LATER.

6. BUT HUA'S METHODICAL, CAUTIOUS AND COMPROMISING STYLE SERVES HIM  
WELL IN THE PRESENT ROUND OF STRUGGLE; HE DOES NOT SEEM VULNERABLE.  
EVEN THOSE IMPATIENT WITH HIS SEMMINGLY DELIBERATE FOOTDRAGGING ON  
TENG'S REHABILITATION CANNOT EASILY MOUNT AN OPEN CHALLENGE TO HIM  
BECAUSE:

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ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 ISO-00 SS-14 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PEKING 1168

LIMDIS

--IN A REGIME OF LEADERS CONSPICUOUSLY LACKING IN THE CHARISMA,  
PRESTIGE AND VENERATION ATTACHED TO MAO, CHOU AND CHU TEH, HUA MOST  
CLOSELY APPROXIMATES A RECOGNIZED LEGITIMATE SUCCESSOR TO MAO  
(DOUBTS ABOUT MAO'S APRIL 30, 1976 BLESSING NOT WITHSTANDING).

--HE IS

AN ELUSIVE TARGET, HAVING CONSISTENTLY PAID LIP SERVICE  
TO THE GOAL AND INTENTION OF BRINGING TENG BACK;

--HE HAS FORMIDABLE SUPPORT IN THE CAPITAL;

--A MOVE TO OUST HIM WOULD SHATTER THE CURRENT FRAGILE UNITY WHICH  
ALL SEEK TO SAFEGUARD.

6A. ALSO WORKING TO HUA'S ADVANTAGE IS A DIVIDED MILITARY LEADERSHIP.

AS AN INSTITUTION, THE ARMY IS THE MAIN BULWARK OF HUA AND HIS REGIME;

IT ENJOYS TODAY ITS GREATEST PRESTIGE SINCE THE 1971 FALL OF LIN PAIO.

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ITS SENIOR LEADER YEH CHIEN-YING IS ROUTINELY DESCRIBED AS "BELOVED  
AND RESPECTED" -- A TERM RESERVED OTHERWISE ONLY FOR CHOU EN-LAI.  
QUESTIONS ABOUT YEH'S HEALTH NOTWITHSTANDING, HE IS UNVIERALLY PER-

CEIVED

AS BEING COEQUAL WITH HUA IN A DEFACTO COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP. TO MAINTAIN HIS CRUCIAL SUPPORT FOR YEH AND THE MILITARY, HUA RECOGNIZES THAT THE MILITARY MUST HAVE CONSIDERABLE SAY IN NATIONAL POLICYMAKING.

HENCE THE DAILY MEDIA ATTENTION TO MILITARY THEMSE AND THE HOLDING UP OF MILITARY MEN AS WORTHY MODELS FOR NATIONAL EMULATION. BUT SIGNIFICANT DIVISIONS WITHIN THE SENIOR MILITARY HIERARCHY GIVE HUA A FREER

HAND THAN HE MIGHT OTHERWISE HAVE; FACTIONAL DIVISIONS AMONG COMMANDERS

ASSOCIATED WITH DIFFERENT FIELD ARMY SYSTEMS; DIFFERING PERSPECTIVES OF CENTRAL LEADERS VERSUS REGIONAL COMMANDERS; A SPLIT OVER

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MILITARY MODERNIZATION (HOW MUCH TO PARE FORCES,

HOW MUCH TO RELY ON IMPORTS OF FOREIGN TECHNOLOGY AND EVEN WEAPONS SYSTEMS, WHETHER TO INCREASE THE MILITARY SHARE OF THE OVERALL

BUDGET) AND GENUINE DIFFERENCES OF POLITICAL IDEOLOGY.

7. PRIMARILY OWING TO THESE ADVANTAGES, HUA AND HIS SUPPORTERS HAD THEIR WAY ON TWO KEY ISSUES AT THE MARCH MEETINGS:

--DEMAOIZATION IN ANY GUISE WAS IMPERMISSABLE (FOR THIS WOULD UNDERCUT

HUA'S LEGITIMACY AND OPEN THE DOOR FOR A NEW ROUND OF FACTIONAL FIGHTING)

--TENG'S REHABILITATION, POPULARLY EXPECTED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE TIEN AN MEN RIOTS THAT LED TO HIS  
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DISMISSAL, WAS DEFERRED ONCE AGAIN -- UNTIL NATIONAL PARTY AND STATE CONGRESSES SCHEDULED FOR THE END OF THE YEAR.

8. PERSISTENT RUMORS HAVE IT THAT TENG, ARROGANT AND INTRANSIGENT AS EVER, SET TOO TOUGH CONDITIONS FOR HIS OWN RETURN AND THEREBY ALIENATED HIS MOST PRESTIGIOUS SUPPORTERS YEH CHIEN-YING AND LI HSIEN-NIEN.

THIS, IT IS SAID, EXPLAINS YEH'S REPORTED ENDORSEMENT OF HUA'S LEADERSHIP.

9. BUT WE SUSPECT THAT YEH AND LI, TOGETHER WITH THEIR CANTON-BASED POLITBURO COLLEAGUES HSU SHIH-YU AND WEI KUO-CHI G, ARE STILL PRESSING

FOR TENG'S UNCONDITIONAL REHABILITATION AND RETURN TO ALL HIS PREVIOUS

POSTS. RECOGNIZING THE CURRENT POWER REALITIES, POSSIBLY BELIEVING THAT THEY HAVE EXTRACTED FROM HUA A FIRM COMMITMENT ON TENG'S RETURN,

AND ASSUMING THAT THE MOOD OF THE CHINESE MASSES IS PRO-TENG AND CAN BE MANIPULATED AGAINST PERSONS UNWILLING TO ACQUIESCE IN HIS RETURN, THEY ARE CURRENTLY MANEUVERING BEHIND THE SCENES AND STRIVING TO STACK

THE DECK IN FAVOR OF TENG AND VETERAN CADRES AT THE FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES.

10. PROGRESS OF THE CURRENT NATIONWIDE PARTY RECTIFICATION CAMPAIGN, CITED AS A PRIORITY TASK FOR 1977 BY HUA BUT SELDOM EMPHASIZED IN THE PRESS, HOLDS THE KEY TO BREAKING THE STALEMATE. OFFICIALLY, THE RECTIFICATION PROCESS HAS BEEN "UNEVEN" THUS FAR, THE RESULT OF NATIONAL

PRIORITY TO DROUGHT-RELIEF EFFORTS, OF "INTERFERENCE" FROM REMAINING ALLIES OF THE GANG OF FOUR, AND PROBABLY OF GENERAL PASSIVITY AND RELUCTANCE TO COMMIT ONESELF IN AN ILL-DEFINED UNPREDICTABLE POLITICAL

MOVEMENT.  
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WHEN NPC DELEGATES ARE SELECTED AND A NEW CENTRAL COMMITTEE COMPOSED,

HOWEVER, THERE PROMISES TO BE A BATTLE ROYAL CENTERING AROUND GENERATIONAL, REGIONAL AND IDEOLOGICAL AFFILIATIONS.

11. AT BEST, THE CONGRESSES WILL BE HELD AS SCHEDULED AND WILL REFLECT IN THEIR MEMBERSHIP THE POST-GANG OF FOUR BALANCE BETWEEN THE VETERAN BUREAUCRATS AND COMMANDERS SUPPORTING TENG AND THE COALITION BACKING HUA. AT WORST, PREPARATIONS FOR THE CONGRESSES MAY founder amidst acrimonious negotiations over the new leadership.

12.  
WF HUA PULLS OFF THE CONGRESSES ON SCHEDULE -- NO MATTER WHAT THE DEGREE OF SUBSTANTIVE DECISION-MAKING -- IT WILL BE AN IMPRESSIVE FEAT FURTHER RAISING HIS STATURE. IF HE MANAGES TO DO SO WITHOUT RELINQUISHING A SIGNIFICANT PART OF HIS POWER TO TENG HSIAO-PING, AND WITHOUT HAVING TO ACQUIESCE IN GREATER CONCENTRATION OF POWER IN THE HANDS OF THE OLD GUARD, THE FEAT WILL BE THAT MUCH MORE IMPRESS-

IVE. HUA WILL INDEED BE "THE WORTHY SUCCESSOR TO CHAIRMAN MAO".

13. BUT WE SUSPECT HUA MAY NOT MANAGE MUCH MORE THAN A SMOOTHING OVER OF DIFFERENCES, A SET OF NEGOTIATED COMPROMISES THAT WILL RETURN TO TENG A DEGREE OF POWER AND THEREBY LEAVE A SERIOUSLY DIVIDED LEADERSHIP. WE ANTICIPATE MANY MORE MONTHS OF INTERNECINE STRUGGLE BE-

FORE THE GENUINE POST-MAO LEADERSHIP EMERGES.  
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## Message Attributes

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